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a catalytic apparatus for purifying NO_x arranged in the exhaust system upstream of said particulate filter, which catalytic apparatus carries a catalyst absorbing NO_x when the air-fuel ratio in the surrounding atmosphere thereof is lean and releasing the absorbed NO_x when said air-fuel ratio is stoichiometric or rich; and

control means for making the air-fuel ratio in said catalytic apparatus rich to release NO_x therefrom and to purify the released NO_x by reduction.

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2. (Amended) A device for purifying the exhaust gas of an internal combustion engine comprising:

a particulate filter arranged in the exhaust system, which carries a catalyst for absorbing and reducing NO_x, said catalyst absorbing NO_x when the air-fuel ratio in the surrounding atmosphere thereof is lean and releasing the absorbed NO_x when said air-fuel ratio is stoichiometric or rich;

a catalytic apparatus for purifying NO_x arranged in the exhaust system upstream of said particulate filter, which catalytic apparatus carries a catalyst absorbing NO_x when the air-fuel ratio in the surrounding atmosphere thereof is lean and releasing the absorbed NO_x when said air-fuel ratio is stoichiometric or rich; and

bypassing means to make possible the exhaust gas bypass said particulate filter downstream said catalytic apparatus.

3. (Twice Amended) A device for purifying the exhaust gas of an internal combustion engine according to claim 2, wherein during the recovery process of the SO_x pollution of said catalytic apparatus, said bypassing means makes the exhaust gas bypass said particulate filter.

4. (Twice Amended) A device for purifying the exhaust gas of an internal combustion engine according to claim 2, wherein immediately after the finishing of the recovery process of the SO_x pollution of said catalytic apparatus, said bypassing means does

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Sub. E1 not make the exhaust gas bypass said particulate filter and thus the exhaust gas passes through said particulate filter.

Sub. E1 5. (Three Times Amended) A device for purifying the exhaust gas of an internal combustion engine comprising:

a particulate filter arranged in the exhaust system, which carries an oxidation catalyst;

C3 a catalytic apparatus for purifying NO_x arranged in the exhaust system upstream of said particulate filter, which catalytic apparatus carries a catalyst absorbing NO_x when the air-fuel ratio in the surrounding atmosphere thereof is lean and releasing the absorbed NO_x when said air-fuel ratio is stoichiometric or rich; and

control means for making the air-fuel ratio in said catalytic apparatus rich to release NO_x therefrom and to purify the released NO_x by reduction.

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 are pending herein. By the previous Office Action, claims 3-4 were allowed; claim 2 was objected to; and claims 1 and 5-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b). By this Amendment, claims 7-8 are canceled and claims 1-5 are amended. No new matter is added.

The attached Appendix includes marked-up copies of each rewritten claim (37 C.F.R. §1.121(c)(1)(ii)).

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 3-4 are allowed and claim 2 is objected to only for being dependent upon a rejected base claim. For the reasons set forth below, all of claims 1-6 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

The previous Office Action rejects claims 1 and 5-8 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Araki (Japanese Publication No. 8-338229) ("JP 229"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.